

POLICY BRIEF



ASM and Sustainability in Africa: Linkages as a Sustainable Livelihood Tool

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is widespread in Africa and exploits a very large number of minerals. The conservative number of people involved is estimated to be more than 10 million. However, these estimates are speculative.

The Africa Mining Vision Action Plan (2011), under its Programme Cluster 4 on ASM, aims to “create a mining sector that harnesses the potential of artisanal and small scale mining to advance integrated and sustainable rural socio-economic development.”

ASM is a livelihood activity that is inherently unsustainable because it relies on depleting assets. In considering ASM’s scope and the issue of sustainability, it is therefore important to demonstrate how sustainability can be derived from it. The key approaches that may be considered are the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) (DFID, 1999); Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); and the mineral linkages concept (Jourdan, 2014).

To turn ASM into a sustainable livelihood activity, it is important to identify the entry points for

sustainability in ASM. In this context researchers and policy makers must:

- grasp a good understanding of the livelihood diversification concept;
- effectively apply SLA to ASM taking into account impacts and ASM policy interventions;
- consider the relationship between ASM, sustainability, mineral linkages and economic development and resilience;
- map SDGs on ASM development; and
- assess how the concept of mineral linkages applies to ASM.

For ASM to contribute to sustainable livelihoods, the sector must contribute to communities’ resilience. The nature of ASM makes it particularly challenging to align all the requirements for sustainable livelihoods.

“ Miners’ human and social capital is degraded due to lack of access to education, prevalence of child labour and level of marginalisation. ”

Key Messages:

- ASM poverty alleviation potential is not easily explored in an unregulated state. Informality dominates the sector and formalisation efforts remain unbalanced across Africa.
- Profiling of miners in ASM and their livelihood strategies is important to better understand how to effect sustainability. Various actors are identified throughout the ASM supply chain with different levels of poverty and vulnerability.
- Gender relations and women’s participation in ASM must be taken into account when creating Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) plans.
- Failures to involve local governments impede SLA efforts and increase uncertainty. SLA in ASM should be multi-sectoral and involve all the sector’s stakeholders.
- Traditional authorities and governance systems must be acknowledged. Traditional leaders are often custodians of the land, often underrated and could become advocates for ASM.

Sustainable Livelihood Approach - SLA

A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future without undermining the natural resource base (Chambers & Conway, 1991).

To sustain positive livelihood outcomes, effective local institutions that deliver goods and services must be in place. An important part of most livelihood programming activities has been community capacity-building and institutional strengthening.

The SLA was developed through interaction of many development stakeholders. The SLA centres on poor rural people and resources and assets at their disposal (any resources, mining or agriculture) that are applicable to ASM. For artisanal miners and especially informal miners, access to assets is challenging.

Miners’ human and social capital is degraded due to lack of access to education, prevalence of child labour and level of marginalisation. Access to financial and physical capital in rural areas is also undeveloped and for miners, it is even more intricate.

The aim of livelihood interventions is sustainable poverty reduction. It is important to investigate how ASM interventions are contextualised in sustainability. A sustainability component is crucial in the economic activities of poor people for poverty reduction. ASM projects on other continents, demonstrate that a well-regulated ASM sector, guided by appropriate policies, and supported by well-resourced government services and private sector, does transform from poverty alleviation to a tangible development engine.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ASM

It is evident that ASM impacts the attainment of SDGs. It is opportune to develop an SDG-based tool for supporting and inculcating of sustainability in ASM through planning and assessment of policies, strategies and programmes. The tool should consider the following:

- Determination of areas that could be impacted under each goal, and how that would affect meeting the targets;
- Determination of the impact of mining (negative and positive) on goal attainment and possible mitigation;
- Determining the partnerships required to meet the goals.

A complementary approach to bring coherence to such an analytical method might be to group the goals into the three key tenets of sustainable development, i.e. social, environment and economic. This allows for an integrated approach to bringing sustainability into mining.

Mineral linkages

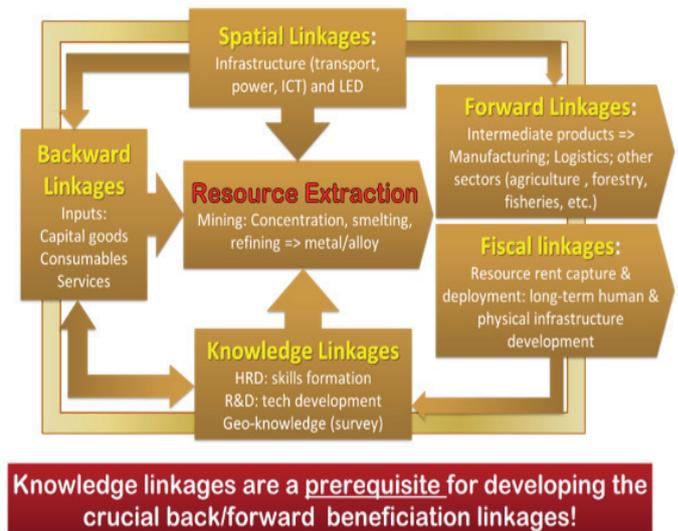
Mineral linkages can be defined as the inputs and outputs into the mining operation. It has been noted that such linkages in the mining sector are not well developed at a local level. This is why the optimisation of mineral linkages is at the core of the aspiration of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV):

“...Transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development...”

In order for the mining sector in Africa to optimise its contribution to the broad-based development of the continent, it must be integrated into national economies through linkages (see figure 1 below). As a major livelihood and economic activity on the African continent, it is important to situate ASM in the sustainable development agenda.

Recommendations

In the case of ASM, an alarming rate of natural capital depletion is noticed following the development of the mining activity. Often ASM is perceived as synonymous with environmental degradation as the most visible impact of the activity. For SLA to be effective with ASM, the co-dependent relation between natural, social and economic capital must be understood.



The macro/micro linkages component is one of the key elements of a sustainable livelihood approach, and this holds a pivotal role in miners' efforts to achieve sustainable livelihoods that will enable them to break the vicious poverty cycle they are trapped in. Some general recommendations for achieving SL in ASM:

- Better situate ASM in the sustainable development agenda and the AMV.
- Develop tools supporting sustainability around ASM, whilst aiding attainment of SDGs and interfacing with policy.
- Build evidence to support the micro and macroeconomic policy environment that is specific to ASM communities. Policies need to encourage local linkages that builds on existing capacity and knowledge.
- Use linkages to tackle marginalisation, economic exclusion and challenge negative effects and perceptions of miners in ASM. Miner's vulnerability should be recognised in national and regional development plans.

References:

- Jourdan, PP. (2014). Sustainability & Governance in the Minerals Sector. Course on mineral policy and contract negotiations. UNIDEP, Course. Lusaka, Zambia.
- DFID (1999) Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets, Numbers 1–8, London: Department for International Development (also available on www.livelihoods.org)
- Chambers, R. and G.R. Conway (1991). Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century. Institute for Development Studies, Discussion Paper, 296.

THE AMDC APPROACH

“ Harnessing minerals resources for Africa’s transformation ”



AFRICA MINING VISION

“Transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of mineral resources to underpin broadbased sustainable growth and socio-economic development.”

African Minerals Development Centre Mission

To work with AU Member States and their national and regional organisations, including the AUC, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to enable mineral resources to play a greater transformative role in the development of the continent through increased economic and social linkages, and in this manner, help address its intractable poverty and limited development.

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The AMDC Workstreams

Our workstreams reflect the priorities identified by African governments.

1. Policy and licensing
2. Geological and mining information systems
3. Governance and participation
4. Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)
5. Linkages, investment and diversification
6. Human and institutional capacities
7. Communication and advocacy

We harness knowledge from these areas to support and inform a wide range of stakeholders. Together, this work supports African mineral economies to: develop consistent development-oriented mineral policies and regulatory frameworks; make effective use of geological and geospatial information for developmental outcomes; diversify their economies by unlocking linkages; establish a knowledge-driven and well-governed African mineral sector that is socially and environmentally accountable, mainstreams gender and contributes to broad-based growth and development; and build a viable and sustainable artisanal and small-scale mining sector to provide decent quality of life for rural communities.

Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM)

- Works to reinforce the extent to which ASM frameworks in African countries align and support AMV implementation.
- Carries out targeted interventions to help optimize ASM contributions towards local entrepreneurship, livelihoods and integrated socio-economic development, with particular focus on the key role of women in ASM.
- Provides thought leadership in collaborative efforts to leverage the potential of ‘development minerals’ for transforming the ASM sector.